Verbals: Finite Forms and Non-Finite Forms

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Abstract

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Finite Forms and Non-Finite Forms of verbs are pragmatic factors in teaching grammar. Verb forms are in two distinct classes such as finites and non-finites and also called verbals. The infinitive is a kind of noun. It is also called verbal noun. The Gerund is a verbal noun (-ing form). It is also used as a subject or an object of the verb like an Infinitive. A participle is used partly as a verb and partly as an adjective. It is also called verbal-adjective.

Introduction

> *Definition of Grammar: the actual definition of grammar is determined by pragmatic factors. If we wish to learn to speak and write, we will focus on the system of rules that underlie a given language, and if we wish to describe the structure of a language, we will focus on the units that make up the language and their relations, and if we wish to understand how speakers of a given language produce and understand sentences, we will focus on the nature of the rules used (Laimutis Valeika and Janina Buitkienė, 2003).*

> *Teaching of grammar offers the learner the means for potentially limitless linguistic creativity. Grammar is partly the study of what forms (or structures) are possible in a language.Thus, grammar is a description of the rules that govern how a language's sentences are formed (Thornbury, 1999).*

The present paper aims to focus on Finite Forms and Non-Finite Forms of verbs which are pragmatic factors in teaching grammar. Verb forms are in two distinct classes such as finites and non-finites and also called verbals.

Finite Verbs

A finite verb is usually the main verb of a clause or sentence limited by person, number and tense.

- He **tells** a story.

- They **saw** my new car.

- I **walk** to the railway station.

- They **jump** with joy.

The verbs- *tells, saw, walk, jump*- in the above four sentences are marked for person, number and tense and so they are called Finite Verbs.

Transitive Verbs and Intransitive Verbs

Further, Finite Verbs are of two groups as Transitive Verbs and Intransitive Verbs. Transitive verbs require one or more objects.

Study the following the examples:

- Most Indians *love* cricket. (Transitive)

- My brother *bought* a house. (Transitive)

- He *gave* her a flower. (Transitive)

The verbs- *love, bought* and *gave* have objects (cricket, house and her, flower) are said to be Transitive Verbs.

Study the following the examples:

- They *run*. (Intransitive)

- Babies *sleep* for many hours. (Intransitive)

- My brother *stood* there. (Intransitive)

The above said verbs- *run, sleep* and *stood* do not have any object are Intransitive Verbs. Some verbs may be used transitively or intransitively.

Study the following the examples:

Transitive Verb	**Intransitive Verb**

No one *rings* the school bell.	The school bell *rings* at 9 o' clock.
She *speaks* Bengali.	She *speaks* quickly.
He *burnt* his fingers.	The fire *burns* brightly.
He *opens* the door.	The shop *opens* at 10 o' clock.

Non-Finite Verbs

Non-finite verbs do not indicate person, number or tense. There are three types of non-finite verb forms: the infinitive (to + verb), the gerund and the participle.

Infinitives:

The infinitive is a kind of noun. It is also called verbal noun. Study the following.

- *To err* is human. (Subject of the verb)

- Birds love *to sing*. (Object of the verb)

- *To respect* our parents is our duty. (Subject of the verb)

- He refuses *to obey* the orders. (Object of the verb)

- Many men desire *to make* money quickly. (Object of the verb)

The word, *to,* is frequently used with the infinitive, but it is not essential in some exceptional verbs or contexts.

- Let him *go*.

- I made him *run*.

- You had better *ask.*

- We would rather *die* than *suffer* so.

- I can *swim.*

Gerunds:

The Gerund is a verbal noun (-*ing form*). It is also used as a subject or an object of the verb like an Infinitive.

Study the following.

Swimming is a good exercise. (Subject of the verb)

I like reading poetry. (Object of the verb)

She is fond of eating sweets. (Object of preposition)

Infinitive and Gerund are same in action and force of a Noun and a Verb. They may be used without any special difference in meaning as:

Gerund	**Infinitive**
Teach me *swimming.*	Teach me **to swim**.
Giving is better than *receiving.*	*To give* is better than *to receive.*
Seeing is *believing.*	*To see* is *to believe*.

Participles:

A participle is a word used partly as a verb and partly as an adjective. It is also called verbal-adjective. Participles are three types: Present participle (with the suffix -*ing*), past participle (with the suffix *–ed, -d, -t, -en or –n*) and perfect participle (*having" + past participle*).

Study the following.

- The *running* boy is short. (Present participle)

- *Given* instructions, he started the quiz. (Past participle)

- The *burning* log fell off the fire. (Present participle)

- Smiling, she hugged the panting dog. (Present participle)

- Find the ***dispossessed***. (Past participle)

- Care for the ***dying*** and the ***wounded***. (Present participle and past participle)

- ***Having heard*** the news, he went ***running.*** (Perfect participle and present participle)

- ***Having made*** a mistake, he apologised. (Perfect participle)

Both the forms of present participles and gerunds may be same but they are used in different purposes.

- ***Walking*** on the grass is forbidden. (Gerund-verbal noun)

- He was seen talking to a policeman. (Present participle-verbal adjective)

Conclusion

The definition of grammar is determined by pragmatic factors which focus on the system of rules that underlie a given language and also focus on the units that make up the language and their relations. Grammar is partly the study of what forms or structures are possible in a language. Verb forms are in two distinct classes such as finites and non-finites and also called verbals. The infinitive and the Gerund are used as verbal nouns, whereas a participle is used as a verbal-adjective.

References

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